



ABERGAVENNY BOROUGH

MEDICAL OFFICER

OF

HEALTH'S REPORT

1949

F. C. R. HARVEY, B.A., B.Sc., M.D., D.P.H.

Medical Officer of Health's Report, 1949.

*Mr. Mayor,
Chairman, Public Health Committee,
Aldermen and Councillors.*

I beg herewith to present the 67th Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, Abergavenny Borough.

The implementation of Part III. of the National Health Service Act, 1946 (Health Services provided by Local Health Authorities) has been revolutionary. The creation of two large Health Authorities i.e., County Councils and County Borough Councils, did not affect, substantially, Abergavenny Borough, but, in many respects has given to this ancient Borough more scope to better its Public Health Services.

Under the de-centralisation of Health Services agreed upon by the County Council and the District Councils and the Ministry, a full time Medical Officer of Health was appointed to Abergavenny Borough from 1st January, 1949. The duties of the Medical Officer of Health include, by agreement, supervision of the Public Health Departments of the other three Local Authorities (i.e., Abergavenny R.D.C., Usk U.D.C., and Pontypool R.D.C.) which, together, form No. 10 Health Area within the Administrative County of Monmouth.

The work of the Medical Officer of Health is very varied, and as the County Council had to retain seven eleventh's of the Medical Officer's time for Child Welfare Clinics and School medical Inspections, four eleventh's of the time is allocated to sanitary work to be spread over the four Councils. It is realised that the allocation of the time for the various functions of the Medical Officer of Health is not completely satisfactory, as more time should be given for Public Health work, but, it must be remembered, that the National Health Service is the most progressive Service ever enforced in any country and, therefore, liable to readjustment in the future. Moreover, the great shortage of doctors prepared to join the Public Health Services is a handicap, and I personally feel that if salaries are not adequately increased in the near future, shortage of doctors may imperil the working of the whole system.

Maternity and Child Welfare.

Babies can be seen once a week at the Presbyterian Hall, Abergavenny; expectant mothers can be seen fortnightly at the same Centre. Two Health Visitors are in attendance, and Welfare Food can be obtained at the Centre with the exception of National Dried Food, Cod Liver Oil and Orange Juice, which can be obtained either at the Food Office or at the W.V.S. Headquarters.

The monthly average number of babies seen at the Child Welfare Clinic was 193. This figure includes cases from the Abergavenny R.D.C. Area.

Domiciliary Midwifery Service.

Under the re-allocation of the District Midwifery Service, one District Midwife is resident in the Borough. The monthly average of nursing visits was 70.

District Nursing Service.

There is one District Nurse resident in the Borough. The monthly average number of nursing visits was 408.

Health Visiting.

One Health Visitor is doing the routine domiciliary visits, School Inspections (cleanliness of body and clothes), and attends the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre.

Night Nursing Service.

The County Council had voted a small sum for the provision of a Night Nursing Service. The Night Nurses, male and female, are to be in possession of certain minimum qualifications. One case in the Borough has been provided with the Service.

Domestic Help Service.

The County Council has provided a Domestic Help Service which is intended for those cases where there is illness, and where there is no able-bodied relative who could give the necessary assistance in the household.

The Service has been useful in providing assistance to aged persons and cases of Chronic sick, who otherwise would have had to

be admitted to Hospitals, thereby helping to relieve the pressure upon hospital accommodation.

The Service is under the direction of the Area Committee Clerk (Mr. D. A. Lewis). Applicants for the Service are assessed to repay the cost of the Service in relation to their income ; persons with a gross income of less than £3/0/0 per week receive the Service free of charge.

The hours allocated to each case are recommended after personal investigation by the District Nurse, Midwife, or Health Visitor, and are submitted to me for approval. Cases where the recommendation exceeds 30 hours per week have to be submitted by the Area Committee Clerk to the County Health Committee for investigation, except maternity cases.

There are approximately 20 Domestic Helps in the Borough ; all are engaged on a Temporary Part-time basis. The number of cases attended in No. 10 Area was 80 ; the average monthly number of hours worked was 2,220.

Ambulance Service.

The County Council took over the responsibility of the Ambulance Service in 1948. Abergavenny Borough was served by two St. John ambulances with four drivers, and they provided the Ambulance Services for the Borough and adjacent area, under the central control of the County Ambulance Officer at Caerleon.

Vaccination against Smallpox and Immunisation against Diphtheria.

Under the National Health Service Act, 1946, vaccination against smallpox and immunisation against diphtheria has been carried out at the surgeries of the General Practitioners, and at the Maternity and Child Welfare Centres ; in both cases free of charge.

The figures for vaccination against smallpox and immunisation against diphtheria for the Borough are as follows :

Vaccination against Smallpox, 1949

Age Groups —	Under 1 yr.	1 to 4 yrs.	5 to 14 yrs.	Over 15 yrs.	Total
	22	11	2	11	46

Immunisation against Diphtheria.

Age Groups—	Under 5 yrs.	5 to 14 yrs.	Total.
	142	9	151

Since the compulsory vaccination against smallpox has been abolished, the Borough of Abergavenny, like the rest of the country, followed the trend of a decrease in vaccination; from the public health point of view it is very regrettable. As shown in two outbreaks of imported smallpox, we are not free of the possibility of a more serious outbreak. Great encouragement is given to mothers for both vaccination against smallpox and immunisation against diphtheria, but the result are more encouraging for immunisation than for vaccination. In the Borough of Abergavenny the Public Health Department sends a Birthday Card to parents reminding them of the advantages of immunisation.

Health Education.

The early part of the last century saw the birth of Public Health as we know it now. The main object being the provision of wholesome water supply, sanitation, and notification of infectious diseases. At the beginning of this century the influence of the environment became more apparent and more emphasis was given to this new factor. We realise now that we cannot complete the picture of ideal health without education. Under the auspices of the Central Council for Health Education, Local Health Authorities have undertaken a campaign to improve the knowledge of the Community on health matters, and a County Health Education Officer was appointed in 1948. We must improve our body cleanliness and home cleanliness, including an improvement in our handling of Food.

With the co-operation of the Sanitary Inspector (Mr. R. J. Howells) a talk was given to the caterers and food handlers of Abergavenny on food cleanliness. It is hoped in 1950 a more comprehensive talk with film projections will be given.

For the fiftieth anniversary of the granting of the Charter to the Borough, a special stand at the Exhibition was allocated to the Public Health Department, and this proved to be a very great success.

Other forms of health education have been undertaken, including display of posters and distribution of leaflets, and I feel this is one of our major tasks in public health to educate the people on all aspects of life.

Mental Health Service.

A County Psychiatrist was appointed in 1948 for the purpose of a Mental Health Service. This Service is co-ordinated with the Regional Hospital Board, and Hospital Management Committees.

No Adult Guidance Clinics are held in Abergavenny, but individual cases, patients suffering from early nervous strain, and who are finding difficulty in adjusting themselves either in their home or at their work, are seen by Dr. J. Newcombe the County Psychiatrist. Cases considered too far advanced are referred to the Regional Hospital Board Psychiatrist.

Welfare Services.

The Welfare Officer of No. 10 Area caters for the needs of Abergavenny Borough as regards Welfare Services, which come within the provisions of the National Assistance Act, 1948.

Medical Appliances.

The location of the Medical Appliances Depot for the Borough is St. John's Ambulance Hall, Abergavenny.

Location of Medical Officer of Health and Area Health Office.

The County Council has now taken over Leven House, Abergavenny and the Services for which I am responsible will be operated from there, together with the Maternity and Child Welfare Centre, in the near future.

VITAL STATISTICS.

	1938	1946	1947	1948	1949
Area (in Acres) ...	2398	2398	2398	2398	2398
Population (estimated)...	7925	8439	8427	8532	8597
Inhabited Houses (according to Rate Book) ...	2366	2310	2388	2455	2495
Rateable Value ...	£49304	£51395	£51658	£53028	£55296
1d. Rate ...	£188	£201	£202	£203	£203

1949	Total	M.	F.	1949.	Borough	County
Live Births—						
Legitimate	132	66	66	Birthrate per 1,000 of estimated resident population ...	15·6	18·2
Illegitimate	2	—	2			
Total	134	66	68			
Still Births—						
Legitimate	6	3	3	Rate per 1,000 total (Live & Stillbirths) Births ...	49·6	0·58
Illegitimate	1	—	1			
Total	7	3	4			
Deaths—						
All Causes	94	39	55	Death Rate per 1,000 of estimated resident population ...	10·93	12·1
Deaths from Puerperal Causes—						
Puerperal Sepis	...	Nil		Rate per 1,000 births... (Live & Stillborn) ...		0·16 1·33
Other Puerperal Causes	Nil					
Total	...	Nil				
					Total	1·49
Death Rate of Infants under one year of age—						
All Infants per 1,000 Live Births				...	29·8	42·7
Legitimate				„ Legitimate Live Births	...	30·3
Illegitimate				„ Illegitimate	...	—
Deaths from Cancer—all ages...M. 5. F. 9. Total 14.						
Average age 66.						
Measles ...				...	Nil	
Whooping Cough				...	Nil	
Diarrhoea, under 2 years of age				...	Nil	
Children under 1 year				Total 4.	Legitimate 4 Illegitimate Nil	
Tuberculosis Pulmonary				...	M. 2. F. Nil	
Non-Pulmonary					Nil	
					—	—Total 2
Ages of Deaths of Children under one year of age—						
Under 1 week				...	2	2
1 to 2 weeks				...	—	
2 to 3 weeks				...	—	
3 to 4 weeks				...	—	2
1 to 3 months				...	1	
3 to 6 months				...	1	
6 to 9 months				...	—	
9 to 12 months				...	—	
Total under 1 year					...	4

<i>Year.</i>	<i>Populations</i>	<i>Live Births.</i>	<i>Deaths.</i>	<i>Birth Rate</i>
1931 ...	8490 (Estimated)			
	8608 (Census)	... 137	119	16'10
1938 ...	7925 (New Borough)	... 115	108	14'50
1939 ...	7832	... 118	144	15'10
1940 ...	8407	... 122	149	14'50
1941 ...	8769	... 130	135	14'60
1942 ...	8468	... 134	113	18'80
1943 ...	8174	... 127	122	15'56
1944 ...	7931	... 139	104	17'50
1945 ...	8275	... 141	120	17'0
1946 ...	8439	... 147	110	17'5
1947 ...	8427	... 152	115	18'0
1948 ...	8532	... 146	138	17'1
1949 ...	8597	... 134	94	15'6

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

Scarlet Fever. During the whole year 16 cases were notified.

Whooping Cough. 2 cases were notified.

Measles. 21 cases were notified.

Cerebro-Spinal Meningitis. Nil.

Infantile Paralysis. Nil.

Erysipelas. 2 cases were notified.

Diphtheria. 2 cases were notified.

Dysentery. 3 cases were notified.

TUBERCULOSIS.

Notified: Pulmonary M. 13 F. 3 Non-Pulmonary M. 1. F. 2.

Deaths: „ M. 2 F.— „ M.— F.—

INFLUENZA. No severe epidemic. Deaths—M. 2. F. 1.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases (other than Tuberculosis)

classified according to age groups

Disease.	Total	Age 0 - 5	Age 5 - 10	Age 10 - 15	Age 15 - 25	Over 25	Treated in Hospital
Diphtheria	2	...	...	...	...	1	2
Scarlet Fever	16	3	10	2	1	...	13
C.S. Meningitis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Measles	21	9	...	11	1	...	1
Whooping Cough	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Enteric Fever (Para B)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Infantile Paralysis	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Dysentery	3	...	...	1	1	1	3
Erysipelas	2	...	...	...	...	2	1

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality during 1949.

AGE.	NEW CASES				DEATHS			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0 — 1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1 — 5	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5 — 10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10 — 15	1	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
15 — 20	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
20 — 30	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
30 — 40	...	...	1	...	1	...	...	...
40 — 50	2	1	...	...	1	...	...	...
50 — 60	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	...
60 & over	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Totals	13	3	1	2	2	...	...	...

Discussion of the Tables.

In the last four years the population of the Borough has not varied to any great extent.

The Birth Rate per 1,000 is slightly below the Birth Rate of the County, 15·6 against 18·2.

The Death Rate per 1,000 is below the Death Rate of the County, 10·93 against 12·1.

The Death Rate of Infants under one year of age per 1,000 live births is substantially below that of the County, 29·8 against 42·7; this is a very great improvement.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

It is difficult to discuss the various notifications because of the small number received during 1949, nevertheless, per 1,000 population, DIPHTHERIA was slightly above the figure for England and Wales, and this calls for renewed efforts towards immunisation.

SCARLET FEVER and MEASLES were well below the figures for England and Wales.

ERYSIPELAS was above the average figures for England and Wales.

TUBERCULOSIS. We had in 1949, nineteen new cases notified in the Borough. This is a high figure, and once more I draw the attention of the Health Committee to the importance of finding suitable accommodation as soon as cases are discharged from Sanatoria. As I have often said at the Health Committee, Tuberculosis is an infectious disease of the household, and we must bear in mind it will spread to the family if proper measures are not taken, and the most important of these measures is the sleeping accommodation. A case of tuberculosis must have one room of its own, and it is only by taking these measures that we can hope to stamp out this glaring evil.

Following a public function, an outbreak of food poisoning at Rhymney, Mon., spread to Wolverhampton. The caterers were a firm from Abergavenny ; three carriers of Sonne dysentery were found and treated in hospital. All the cases made an uneventful recovery.

No cases of POLIOMYELITIS (Infantile Paralysis) were notified during 1949 although there was a serious outbreak all over the Country.

In conclusion, with the exception of Tuberculosis, the sanitary condition of the Borough has been satisfactory on the whole.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

F. C. R. HARVEY,

Medical Officer of Health.

Water Supply.

A pure supply of water is maintained in the town by chlorination.

9 samples of water taken from the town's mains for bacteriological samples were found to be satisfactory.

In November a fracture was observed in the Reservoir. In order to ascertain what emergency chlorination would be required during the possible discontinuance of the use of the Reservoir, it was proposed to run a series of tests to ascertain the fluctuating degrees of contamination of the raw supply.

Of 4 samples taken from November, it showed a fluctuation from 35 B Coli per 100 ml. to 1 per 100 ml.

2 samples taken from premises and which were found to be unsatisfactory lead to certain works being carried out to remove the cause of contamination.

Milk Supply.

Periodic samples were taken from retailers and the quality of milk generally was found to be good. Of 26 samples taken, 9 were found to be unsatisfactory. Of those found to be unsatisfactory, 8 retailers were from dairies outside the Borough.

The adverse reports were sent to the appropriate authority for their attention. In the case of one producer retailer in the Borough, the necessary advice was given and subsequent samples showed a clean milk.

Inspection of Places where Food is Prepared.

The thirteen premises in the town were inspected regularly and were found to be in a satisfactory condition.

Fish Fryers.

There are 3 in the Borough and regular inspections are carried out to ensure that they are maintained in a satisfactory state.

Bakehouses.

10 premises were in use during the year. 25 visits were made. Limewashing was carried out in 5 premises following verbal notice. Conditions generally were fairly satisfactory.

Butchers' Shops.

Small goods, including brawn, polonies; pies, faggots, etc., were prepared at 9 butchers' establishments.

At the butchers' establishments the work is carried out in a special room, and electric power is available. All the premises are regularly visited by the Inspector, and the conditions were found to be satisfactory.

Shops Act, 1934.

62 visits were made. Conditions generally were found to be satisfactory.

Factories and Workshops.

48 visits were made, and conditions were found to be satisfactory.

HOUSING.

The first site, Pitt's Nurseries, in the Authorities post-war housing schemes was completed. Site works on the Llwynu Farm Estate were carried on and 21 houses were completed.

Of private houses 14 were completed by the County Council for the County Police, on the Holywell Road Site. 5 houses were completed under private license.

Inspection of Dwelling Houses during the Year.

(1) (a)	Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	...	...	...	846
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	...			890
(2) (a)	Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above which are inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulation, 1925 ...				230
	(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose	...			260
(3)	Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	...	...		1
(4)	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	...	...	...	68

Remedy of Defects during the Year without service of formal notice.

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequences of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	30
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Action under Statutory Powers during the Year.

(a) Proceedings under Sections 9, 10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936 :			
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs	...		1
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices	...		Nil
(a) By Owners	...	..	Nil
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners	...		Nil
(b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts :			
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	..	...	5
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices...			6
(a) By Owners	...	...	6
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners	...		Nil
(c) Proceedings under Section 12 of the Housing Act, 1930 :			
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	...	...	1
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or rooms having been rendered fit	...	...	Nil

Eradication of Bed Bugs.

(a) Number of Council Houses :			
(1) Found infested	...	...	3
(2) Disinfested	...	...	3
(b) Number of Other Houses :			
(1) Found infested	...	...	2
(2) Disinfested	...	...	2

These houses were visited either in normal house-to-house inspections or as a result of complaints from the tenant.

Rodent Control.

One full time operator was employed with casual assistance when necessary.

Two maintenance treatments of the sewers were carried out with satisfactory results.

Continuous surveys of the district were maintained and an observation from these reports indicate that the sewers provide easy access and breeding grounds for rats. The number of surface infestations appear to increase gradually up to the time at which the maintenance treatment of the sewers is due. When this latter is completed the number of surface infestations are almost immediately reduced to a negligible amount.

Inspection of the local authority's refuse tips indicate that the intensive campaigns carried out in earlier years, together with the present system of burying all putrefying matters in quicklime, have succeeded in reducing the infestation of rats there to a minor infestation.

During the year 113 surface infestations were dealt with.

Ice Cream.

There are 5 manufacturers in the town. 4 are making ice-cream in accordance with the Ice-Cream (Heat Treatment) Regulations. The other manufacturers supply a cold mix ice-cream.

All the manufacturers are in a small retail trade.

The other 22 premises registered retail only ready wrapped ice-cream supplied by wholesalers.

Of 6 samples taken, 4 results were very satisfactory. In the other 2 cases new machinery was installed.

Frequent routine inspections were carried out in these premises.

Meat and Other Foods.

The following tables showing the number of animals killed, particulars of meat condemnations and incidence of disease.

Number killed :

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep & Lambs.	Pigs.
559	963	7,726	2,657

Number inspected :

559	963	7,726	2,657
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All Diseases except Tuberculosis :

Whole carcasses condemned—

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep & Lambs.	Pigs.
10	Nil.	22	8

Carcase of which some part or organ was condemned—

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep & Lambs.	Pigs.
264	6	679	17

Percentage of the number inspected with disease other than Tuberculosis—8·45%

Tuberculosis only :

Whole carcasses condemned—

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep & Lambs.	Pigs.
14	Nil.	Nil	4

Carcase of which some part or organ was condemned—

Cattle.	Calves.	Sheep & Lambs.	Pigs.
54	3	Nil.	122

Percentage of the number of animals killed affected with Tuberculosis—1·65%

Percentage of the number of cattle killed affected with Tuberculosis—12·15%

Total weight of carcase meat condemned—11,958 lbs.

Total weight of offal condemned—10,710 lbs.

Other Foods condemned were as follows.

78 tins Peas ; 4 tins Vegetables ; 2 tins Beef Loaf ; 1 tin Pork Brawn ; 10 tins Veal Loaf ; 12 tins Meat ; 6 tins Pork & Gravy ; 1 tin Pork Sausage ; 1 tin Corned Beef Hash ; 1 tin Jellied Veal ; 6 tins Lunch Meat ; 4 tins Meat & Veg. ; 10 tins Meat Paste ; 38lbs. Tomato Sausage ; 1½lbs. Black Puddings ; 29 tins Soup ; 13 tins Beans ; 8 tins Carrots , 58 tins Tomatoes ; 2 tins Spinach ; 57 tins Silver Beet ; 1 tin Bacon ; 25 tins Sliced Beetroot ; 1 bottle Olives ; 1 bottle Macedons ; 43¾lbs. Bacon ; 75 Eggs ; 81½lbs. Sugar ; 1 tin Herrings ; 4 tins Salmon ; 7lbs. Cheese ; 3 bottles Coffee ; 20 Fish-cakes ; 23¼lbs. Butter ; 1 tin Sardines ; 2 tins Crawfish ; 1½lbs. Tea ; 5 tins Syrup ; 1 bottle Cream ; ½lb. Suet ; 2 tins Soya Flour ; 2 bottles Gerkins ; 74 tins Evaporated Milk ; 19 tins Nestles Milk ; 25 tins Skimmed Milk ; 64lbs. Meat ; 6 tins Spaghetti ; 45 stone Herrings ; 9 stone Haddock ; 5 stone Bream ; 4 stone Bloaters ; 221¾lbs. Cod ; 3 stone Codlings ; 21½lbs. Dabs ; 21½lbs. Lobsters ; 7½lbs. Salmon ; 18 stone Mackerel ; 10 stone Plaice ; 3lbs. Pollack ; 74 Crabs ; 2 tins Pilchards ; 1 tin Norwegian Sild ; 5 tins Chinards ; 3 tins Rhubarb ; 1 tin Apple Puree ; 1 bottle Bovril ; 1 tin Bournvita ; 1 tin Pudding ; 3 tins Kidney Beans ; 5 tins Pears ; 3 tins Peaches ; 130 tins Apricots ; 98 tins Sliced Peaches ; 1 tin Damsons ; 1 tin Cherries ; 11 tins Grapes ; 16 tins Plums ; 1 tin Pine Juice ; 13 tins Orange Juice ; 16 tins Grape-fruit Juice ; 9 tins Marmalade ; 2 tins Gooseberry Jam ; 4 tins Plum Jam ; 4 tins Apple Jelly ; 2 tins Fish Paste.

RAINFALL IN 1949.

Rain Gauge ... { Diameter of Funnel, 5 inches.
 ... { Height of Top } Above Ground 1 ft.
 ... { Situation :- Bailey Park. „ Sea Level 215 ft.

<i>Month.</i>			<i>Total Depth Inches.</i>
January	...	...	1'34
February	...	...	1'41
March	...	...	1'30
April	...	...	2'22
May	...	...	2'29
June	...	...	0'64
July	...	...	0'57
August	...	...	1'38
September	...	...	3'15
October	...	...	8'45
November	...	...	4'82
December	...	...	2'29
Total		...	29'86

ROGER J. HOWELLS,
 Sanitary Inspector.

